

THE CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

October/November 2010

Price: For whatever it's worth.

Inside Out Christianity

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Ernie Levy, the Jewish protagonist in André Schwarz-Bart's novel, *The Last of the Just*, is brutalized by self-proclaimed Christians in Nazi Germany and Vichy France, but, upon hearing the New Testament for the first time, he is shocked to discover how gentle the Jesus described within actually is. Levy says, "Christians say they love Christ, but I think they hate him without knowing it. So they take the cross by the other end and make a sword of it and strike us with it."

In 1982, when I went to Saint Benedict's Catholic Worker in Washington, DC, I saw virulently anti-Catholic posters announcing an upcoming "Christian" mission. I heard people use the word "Christian" as an adjective which did not mean progressive and peaceful, but politically reactionary and socially repressive. President Ronald Reagan, an unabashed militarist and anti-labor capitalist, was in power largely due to anti-abortion Catholics and evangelical Christians. And there I was in a Catholic Worker community where its founder, Michael Kirwan, constantly espoused returning to the roots of Christianity.

Like the members of the early Church, Michael took the scriptural Jesus seriously. Without slipping into straitjacket fundamentalism, he tried to be faithful to the repeated Gospel themes—the works of mercy, peacemaking, personalism, simplicity, compassion, and prayer. He inspired me to see the New Testament as an invitation to liberation from anxiety, an invitation to joy.

Of course, everyone fails to live up to their highest ideals, myself very much in-

cluded, but I believed and still believe that one cannot hope to follow Jesus if one has no idea where He's going.

Despite the Just War Theory, the New Testament is replete with appeals for total nonviolence. **"But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly..."** (Luke 6:27-28). **"The thief**

comes only to kill and destroy. I have come so that you may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

Despite Max Weber's **Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism** and the Wall Street mantra, "Greed is good," the New Testament counsels us to **"Give to everyone who asks you, and do not**

ask for your property back from the one who robs you.... lend without any hope of return" (Luke 6:30, 35) and to **"Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven"** (Matthew 19:21) for **"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven"** (Mark 10:26).

In one of the most extraordinary definitions of what is essential for followers of Jesus, Saint Matthew's description of the Last Judgment is instructive. All the nations are assembled before God and divided into two groups, sheep and goats, saved and damned, on the basis of whether or not they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, visited the prisoner, and made the stranger wel-

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King of Kings Migrant of Migrants

by Most Rev. Thomas Wenski

Editor's Note: The following is a recent homily delivered by the Archbishop of Miami, Florida at a welcome Mass, upon his arrival in the archdiocese. It is reprinted from the August-October 2010 issue of The Houston Catholic Worker, a newspaper which is printed in Spanish and English. Archbishop Wenski is fluent in English, Spanish, and Creole.

Our world today is increasingly globalized: Pope Benedict XVI said that globalization has made us all neighbors, but it has not made us brothers.

Part of the globalization we experience today is the fact of migration. In a globalized world, goods and merchandise made in one continent are bought and sold in another, half a world away; information and money can cross borders in an instant; and, in a globalized world, people also increasingly move across borders—often in dramatic ways.

The Church teaches us not to fear the migrant—and the Church warns us not to mistreat the migrant. In a way, just as we call Jesus the King of Kings, we can refer to him as the Migrant of Migrants as well. In becoming a man like us, he "migrated" from heaven. He became a citizen of our world so that we in turn might become citizens of the world to come. And those who will enter into His heavenly homeland, will do so because, as He Himself will tell us: **"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."**

So we can draw a parallel to Jesus' coming among us as a man and a newcomer's arrival in a strange land—in this

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Gustave Doré

Christianity

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come because “as you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.” Eternal salvation is determined exclusively by compassion for those in need. No one is asked about their religion or denomination. There’s no theology quiz. The sheep may well include some self-proclaimed atheists and the goats may include a few daily Mass goers. What matters is love in action. This comes as a big shock to those who think salvation is determined by wealth, military might, ethnic purity, orthodoxy, or any combination of religious practices.

At its core, Christianity is a merciful religion. When it is presented otherwise, it is good to remind the presenter of Jesus’ warning: **“Anyone who brings down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck”** (Mark 9:42).

On August 28th, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech, conservative commentator Glenn Beck gathered tens of thousands in front of the Lincoln Memorial to “reclaim the civil rights movement” via a “return to Biblical principles.” The following day, on Fox News Sunday, Chris Wallace pointed out to Beck that the full name of the 1963 civil rights protest was the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.” Wallace said: “John Lewis, then a student, now a congressman, said this at the event: ‘We need a bill that will ensure the equality of a maid who earns \$5 a week in the home of the family whose total income is \$100,000 a year.’ The civil rights movement was always about an economic agenda.” Beck replied, “that’s a part of it I don’t agree with.” Beck also doesn’t agree with King’s Biblical call for nuclear disarmament and an end to war. What leapt out of the pages of scripture for King is rejected by Beck and too many others.

And yet, even though all religions have members who cherry pick or twist their ideals, it is also true that there are practi-



Ade Bethune

tioners of each faith who do not lose their way. In Islamic countries for example, hospitality is a cultural norm. I met a Palestinian man on a bus outside Bethlehem who asked me if there really were homeless people sleeping on the streets of US cities. When I said yes, he looked shocked and said with deep sincerity, “We would *never* allow such a thing here.” When the Amish were asked how they could forgive the man who murdered their schoolchildren, the Amish responded matter-of-factly that forgiveness was central to Christianity. They inculcated the fourth line of the Lord’s prayer which asks God to forgive us only in so far as we forgive others.

Mohammad Shafiq ur Rahman, who was arrested on May 13th on suspicion of involvement in the May 1st car bombing attempt in New York City, was cleared of all charges and released to his Watertown, Massachusetts wife and family on August 30th. He told *The Boston Globe*, “I’m a dedicated father, and I’m a dedicated Muslim. In my faith, whatever the Pakistani Taliban is doing is a crime against Muslims. It’s not justified by religion.... I want people to know, this is not the faith or Muslim religion.”

Osama bin Laden and Glenn Beck can quote scripture out of context all they want, but it will not cloud the fact that both Christianity and Islam believe in a merciful God.

When Dianne Williamson, a columnist for *The Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, wrote an op-ed calling Glenn Beck

a “nut-job demagogue,” she received 50 irate emails from all over the country. One writer said, “I hope you rot in hell with the (bad word) Muslims.” One accused President Obama of hating “Whites, Christians, America, capitalism, and anything or anyone else supporting our Constitution and country.” Another called her a “dimwit,” repeated Beck’s assertion that President Obama is a Muslim, and said, “I am glad that in all my years in law enforcement I never gave a muzlum an even break.”

These ignorant, angry, and bigoted people probably see themselves as faithful Christians. We must not let them carry the day. Like Mohammad Shafiq ur Rahman, we need to proclaim the best of our faith. In the same way that Americans are tending to tar Islam with a violent brush, Muslims overseas, especially those who are victims of US troops, are painting American Christians as bloodthirsty crusaders. We prove them wrong with tolerance, mercy, compassion, justice, and peace.

In his 1967 speech against the Vietnam War, Martin Luther King, Jr. called for “an all-embracing and unconditional love for all humanity. This oft misunderstood and misinterpreted concept—so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as weak and cowardly force—has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of [humanity].... This Hindu-Muslim-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: **‘Let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love.’**” Ω

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RADICAL

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52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089

Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

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Muslims: The other children of Abraham

interview by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

Editor's Note: The following interview with John Esposito and Muhammad Arif is reprinted from the April/May 1987 issue of The Catholic Radical. At that time, Dr. Esposito was a professor of religious studies at Holy Cross College and Mr. Arif was the director of interfaith relations at Worcester's Islamic Center.

Catholic Radical: What are some of the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity?

Esposito: The strongest similarity between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity is that Islam recognizes the same universal God. Allah is the Arabic word for God. Muslims recognize the same God and line of prophets, that is, they begin with Abraham and accept Moses, Noah, Jesus, and Muhammad, who is considered the final prophet. In fact, one can very easily say that all three traditions pursue the same God and are children of Abraham.... The difference is that whereas Jews and Christians trace their line through Abraham and Isaac, Muslims trace it through Ishmael.

Muslims believe that, while God revealed Himself through the prophets, the Torah, the Gospel, and Christ, that in fact the texts that we Christians and Jews have... are corrupted by a lot of human fabrication.... Vis à vis Christianity, what Muslims would point to is that the one God takes on a triune nature. In fact, for Muslims, it is hard to see how it is not three gods...that Jesus, the great prophet, is then elevated to the status of God, which Muslims would say contradicts the nature of God. Now I think what most readers are not aware of is the extent to which both Jesus and Mary in the Quran are held in very, very high regard.

CR: When did Muhammad live?

Esposito: 570-632 A.D. The Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad over a period of 22 years. The first revelation came in 610 and continued until his death in 632.

CR: What are the basic religious prac-

tices of a Muslim?

Esposito: What all Muslims share in common are what we call the Five Pillars of Islam, which are: 1) the confession of faith...that there is no God but the God, the Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet, 2) prayer five times a day, 3) fasting during the month of Ramadan, from sunrise to sunset—no food, drink, smoking, sex, etc., 4) a poor tithe, 2.5% of your wealth



is to be given to the poor, and 5) pilgrimage to Mecca.

CR: Who are the Muslims?

Esposito: Most people equate Arab with Muslim. In fact, while most Arabs are Muslim, perhaps 85-90%, you also have a strong Christian Arab community. In fact, most Muslims are not Arabs. Most Muslims are Asian or African. They are from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, the Philippines, and India.... It's a world religion.

CR: Can you describe the Islamic understanding of prayer?

Arif: Well, we pray five times a day and Friday is our main congregation day when there is a sermon led by a leader, the imam. Five times a day we are encouraged to go to the mosque.... Prayer at your home is also all right. Before the prayer, we have to clean ourselves with ablutions,

or *wudu*. We have to clean our hands and face and feet in a very carefully proscribed manner. Under certain conditions you are even required to take a shower and then go and pray. That is prayer as a ritual, but in Islam the meaning of worship is that you obey God.

The word Islam means obedience to God and peace. The Muslim is the one who obeys God's will.... Total worship means obedience, and obedience means that in everyday life, in every activity, you follow the commands and directions as they have been set forth by God.... For example, I go and earn my living, even that is a worship if I am doing it in a legitimate manner—what we call *halal*. Suppose I am earning my living in an illegitimate manner, that would be considered *haram*... a defiance of God. In Islam, life has a purpose and the purpose is to obey God and the ritual prayers are only a part and not the whole. Everything should be worship.

CR: What does your faith teach about working for peace?

Arif: I do not see that the message of Christ was any different from the message of the Prophet Muhammad because it comes from the same God. Islam teaches us to have peace, but it also teaches us to try and have peace which is lasting, durable, and acceptable to all and does not hurt the dignity of anybody. To us when we talk of peace, we talk of peace with justice. I have seen this weakness in Western society a lot—that they will talk about peace. Peace at what terms? Most of the problems in the world that have led to war have been caused by injustice....

CR: What does the Quran teach about caring for the poor and the destitute?

Arif: One of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad is: "If you have eaten and your neighbor has gone hungry, I am not pleased with you." This is the principle of Islamic teaching.

Omar, the second caliph after the Prophet
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Migrant of Migrants

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way, perhaps we can contemplate the face of Jesus in the visage of the immigrant. In the divisive debates on immigration reform, too often immigrants—especially the undocumented—are demonized, seen as threats, and not as our brothers and sisters, or even among the “least” of His brothers and sisters.

Xenophobic politics that focus on the “illegal immigrant” as a problem obscures the human face of immigration. Dramatic “get-tough” arrests of poor, low-wage workers will not solve our immigration crisis. In fact, such actions often engender more confusion and bitterness. The real problem is not the immigrant, but the broken system that cynically tolerates a growing underclass of vulnerable people, outside the protection of the law. Their labor is needed, yet the present immigration regime does not provide them or their employers with the necessary avenues which would allow them to access the system and become legal. No human being should be reduced to being a “problem.” Such reductive thinking demonizes the “illegal immigrant” and ultimately dehumanizes us all.

Like the immigrant who arrives in our land, the Eternal Son of God through His Incarnation pitches His tent in our midst. And, like Jesus, who was born in a stable because there was no room for Him in the inn, today, even while they toil at jobs that Americans can not or will not do, immigrants hear again what Mary and Joseph heard in Bethlehem two millennia ago:

there is no room in the inn for you. And like many of you here today, Jesus too was a refugee, a political refugee forced to flee from the despotic King Herod.

This is why the Church will continue to speak out on behalf of migrants everywhere. We speak out in defense of those, especially the young, who are trafficked across borders to be exploited in the sex trade. We will continue to advocate for a just and equitable reform of a broken immigration system that continues to sepa-



“Flight into Egypt” by Fritz Eichenberg

rate families for unacceptable periods of time and that provides no path to citizenship for millions who work in jobs that otherwise would have gone unfilled. We will defend the rights of refugees and asylum seekers for a safe haven from persecution and violence.

The newcomer—regardless of legal status—is a human person, he is a brother, and she is a sister with a claim on our solidarity. And because of that solidarity we must build not walls but bridges. Ω

Muslims

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et died, was in a mosque one night where he used to sleep. Some people came and saw him and he was awake and they said, “Why are you awake? Why aren’t you sleeping?” He said, “It is such a big country and I am responsible for everybody’s well-being and I am not sure if everybody is well-fed at night. What if one person has gone hungry tonight and has not been able to sleep, then what will happen to me when I die? On the Day of Judgment, God will ask me, ‘I had given you the responsibility to govern these people and you were responsible for their well-being and why did somebody go hungry?’”

Being rich is not looked down upon as long as the rich realize that with the riches come the responsibility. Unfortunately, we have bifurcated the two.

Human nature has an instinct to be selfish. Now there are two solutions for this selfishness.... One is to bow and surrender to this selfish nature and uphold freedom to the extent that it goes wild and we do not even know what we are doing in the nature of freedom, a freedom which is hurting not only the individual but also the society. The other extreme is communism, where you totally take away freedom. Islam, and maybe Christianity, if you are a true follower of what Christ is saying, tries to tell us that there is a middle path where you have freedom as an individual, but you have obligations to God. I think that is where the importance of any religion lies. Perhaps they differ in their specifics, but the general theme, to me, is the same. Ω

The Church also has a high regard for the Muslims, who worship one God, living and subsistent, merciful and omnipotent, the Creator of heaven and earth. **Vatican II, Nostra Aetate 3**

The religiosity of Muslims deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer. The image of believers in Allah who, without caring about time or place, fall to their knees and immerse themselves in prayer, remains a model for all those who invoke the true God.

Pope John Paul II

Virtual Military Recruiting

by Ciaron O'Reilly

Editor's Note: The author is a member of the London, England Catholic Worker.

As the British war dead reaches 331 in Afghanistan, British expenditure on Iraq and Afghanistan flows over £20 billion, Tony Blair promises conscience profits from his autobiography to the British Legion, and Bradley Manning remains in custody for the wikileaks revelations—the recession meets the need for more cannon fodder in our local low-income neighborhood of Dalston.

The army is running a “Showroom” in a shopping center on Kingston Road. According to London's *Hackney Gazette*, the Showroom is “home to a virtual battlefield simulator which gives visitors a chance to use their friends as target practice with a replica handgun. Lucy Cote, an outraged member of Mothers Against Guns, said ‘It is grossly insensitive to house the Showroom in a borough that has been plagued by gun violence.’”

The Showroom, which is the first of its kind in the country, provides a virtual battlefield simulator for use for those 14 years and older. The British and Russian militaries are the only European militaries that recruit soldiers as young as 16. The military plans to open such showrooms across the country.

Non-officer recruitment in Britain draws mostly on young people, 16 and up, who live in disadvantaged communities. At the Showroom, children are introduced to the potential benefits of a military career but not to the risks. Warfare is glamorized and sanitized.

The army is a six-year trap for those under 18. A new recruit may give 14 days notice and leave—but only between the second and the sixth month of service; after that they must remain in the army full time until they are 22. They cannot buy themselves out. If the recruit is under 18, the commanding officer has discretionary power of discharge, but this may be refused. After leaving the army, recruits must remain in the reserves for another six years. They may not be free to leave, even when they are over 22, if they signed up for certain army training courses. The

military estimates that 2,200 soldiers go absent without leave (AWOL) each year, risking a criminal conviction and detention.

In the Catholic Worker tradition, to “vigil” is to stay awake while society



Brian Kavanagh

slumbers. After vigiling outside the Showroom today, it is evident that nine years

into this war on Afghanistan there is no popular support for the war on the streets. Alas, there is also little evidence of popular or visible opposition. We spoke to two young women who had just enlisted. Our opposition to the war was affirmed by a number of mostly older folks. One man, who lost his father in the final year of WWII, was disgusted that the British Legion was accepting “blood money” from Blair. One young man interpreted our vigil as anti-soldier. We informed him that the most significant opposition and resistance to this war is presently coming from within the US and British military and from military families.

We will continue to return to the Army Showroom in Dalston on a weekly basis. Our sister Catholic Worker communities carry out vigils in Oxford, the town in which the post mortems of the British military war dead are carried out, and at Northwood Headquarters. Ω

Fighting Them on the Beaches

by David Polden

On July 23rd, a dozen Jewish and a dozen Palestinian women, one baby, and three Palestinian children traveled by car to spend a day at the seaside. They toured Tel-Aviv and Jaffa, ate together in a restaurant, swam in the sea, and played on the beach. Afterwards, they visited Jerusalem.

Such an ordinary day out, but an act of civil disobedience nonetheless as the Palestinians were from the West Bank and had no entry permits into Israel. After the Palestinians had been safely smuggled back, the Jewish women signed a letter to the press publicizing their act of defiance.

In their letter, they wrote: “We are announcing here publicly that we deliberately violated the Law of Entry into Israel.... We cannot assent to the legality of the Entry into Israel Law, which allows every Israeli and every Jew to move freely in all regions between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River

while depriving Palestinians of this same right.... They are not permitted free movement within the occupied territories nor are they allowed to enter the towns and cities across the Green Line, where their families, nation, and tradition are deeply

rooted.... Most of our Palestinian guests had never seen the sea. Most had not, in their entire lives, prayed at their sacred places: they looked upon them longingly from the heights of Mount Scopus.... The authorities separate us from these women with fences and roadblocks, laws and regulations, often claimed to protect our safety.

In fact, the barriers are only designed to perpetuate mutual

enmity and the control of Palestinian land seized illegally in contravention of international laws and the values of justice and humanity. It is not we who are violating the law: the State of Israel has been violating it for decades.” Ω



Rockwell Kent

Letters



Michael McCurdy

Dear Scott,

Enjoyed very much the August-September issue of *The Catholic Radical*. Contrary to popular belief that dropping the two [atomic] bombs on Japan saved lives, my own reading of history tells me that is political B.S.. [President Harry] Truman dropped those bombs purely to send a message to [the Soviet Premier Josef] Stalin about messing with the USA. The Americans and allies held a naval blockade on Japan and we could have starved Japan into submission. How many countries have nuclear weapons, but, sadly we are the only country to use them. Truman also considered using the bomb during the Korean Conflict, but was heavily opposed by Congress. Anyway that's my take.

Richard Douglass
Northampton, Massachusetts

Dear Scott, Claire, et. al.,

Enclosed is a donation, for which I used my first check. When I first got my checking account, I started thinking about the best way to invest my money. I learned in Economics to use the word "utility" to describe the satisfaction one gets from a certain activity or choice. The most basic principle of economists—laid down by Adam Smith himself—is that people always strive to maximize their utility. I decided to invest with you because that would bring about the most utility, not just for me but for the many disadvantaged people you help every day. That, to me, seemed like a better investment than anything Wall Street could ever offer me. I don't want more money to just compound on itself. I want real good done in the world. ...I hope that this small sum can help you. Keep up the good work.

Alex Jones
Exeter, New Hampshire

Dear Claire and Scott,
Apropos of Father Bourgeois' essay on "The Ordination of Women," a couple of questions. I wonder if the issue doesn't go even deeper. After all, Jesus didn't ordain any priests, female or male, not even the twelve apostles. The first Christian communities gathered in homes for Eucharistic meals. They operated collegially, empowered by the priestly charism they shared equally by reason of their baptism. They commemorated in a communal prayer the breaking of bread in memory of Jesus. We have no evidence they felt a need for a single presider. This community of equals chose from their midst people to serve as equals according to their gifts in the ministries of healing, prophecy, liturgy, catechesis, evangelization, preaching, etc..

With the establishment in the early 4th century of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, this equality disappeared, and the community became divided into the powerful priest-Christians and the disempowered lay-Christians, into a clerical caste and out-castes, into pastors and sheep, into authorities who command and the rest who obey, into men who could aspire to a full priestly Christianity and women who were to be excluded.

Recall with Father Bourgeois, Galatians 3: **"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."**

It is time for all baptized Christians, men and women alike, to exercise the fullness of their baptismal gifts, without apology and without waiting for permission. Will Christians such as these find themselves on the right side of history as the clerical caste withers away? Just asking.

Ed Stevens
Wayland, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: On July 17th, National Public Radio reported on a group of orthodox, conservative, and reform Jewish women, clad in prayer shawls, who go weekly to the Western Wall in Jerusalem to read the Torah and pray. They get arrested because only men are allowed to read the Torah. Their witness is compelling to us as Catholic Workers because it's a lay effort, arising out of devout faith and using traditional prayers and imagery to challenge sexism. Like the Jewish women, our goal is more inclusive religious participation within our traditions.

Scott,

...as to why the Catholic Worker House does not participate in liturgies presided over by "women priests".... The explanation (as I remember it) was that it was out of respect or deference to Rome/Vatican since they as yet do not recognize it. In that same edition there was a story about people's questions, surrounding the expected response of the pope to the nuclear blast at Hiroshima. Dorothy Day responded with words to effect that whatever the response from the Vatican/pope would be, the question we ought to be asking is "What does Jesus and the Gospels say?"

The impulse of the article seemed to be that we must bear witness with goodness, justice, truth, etc, even if it is not officially sanctioned by the current leadership (or lack of it, or perversion of it).

Our own peace and justice group has tried in vain to get Cardinal O'Malley to join in a meager effort to speak against torture. After three years, he still refuses.

Can you imagine if we abandoned this effort because we were "waiting for our leader" to come around? What would Dorothy say about that?!

Rev. Steve Josoma
Dedham, Massachusetts

Dear Scott,

...I read your editor's note for the Father Roy Bourgeois letter to his community. I think his letter is brilliant and spot on. We were at Mass on Sunday with a Vietnamese priest, whom we know to be a lovely man, but who was utterly unintelligible. (I fully respect the struggle of learning a new language. I have a drawer full of embarrassing gaffes I made in Spanish while living in Latin America.) We import priests to fill our serious shortage, while fully capable women, who are ready, willing, and fully able, are rejected and denied their authentic call. I do think the analogy with racism is exactly right. I know many good people, men and women, who have been so hurt by this rejection, who have reached their limit in their ability to tolerate a controlling, domineering, self-important, narrow, rigid, and utterly self-assured patriarchal hierarchy and have either withdrawn from or have outright left the Catholic Church. I don't blame them. The smug, pietistical, and dry bunch coming out of our local seminary is unbearable for the most part,

with rare exceptions. The Church in white North American circles is pathetic rather than prophetic, a misogynistic, irrelevant boy's club for the most part. A number of Catholic Workers have given up on the institutional church and would no more attend a Mass than a slave auction.

[On the other hand, like you], I, too, only attend Mass led by a priest, both because I want to change from within and I find the group-led liturgies pretty awful. Those liturgies tend to affirm and worship through the group's particular world view and are in danger of becoming a greenhouse of mutual self-buildup. Going to Mass with people of many worldviews, and, where a community is built, allows for interaction and dialogue amongst people of different viewpoints, life experiences, circumstances, and socio-economic status. Not always an easy mix, but when done well involves listening deeply and respectfully, meeting people where they are at, and exposing your beliefs and opinions to the sunlight of critical reflection. I know I learned far more about poor working immigrant families from my parish than from the Catholic

Worker. I know from my living in Latin America that the Church (usually with a small "c") community can be a vital agent of change for the better, for social justice and peace.

I respect Father Roy Bourgeois's act of non-violent witness and question why we hesitate to more openly and directly challenge the idea of a male-only priesthood. That the Pope says so, so we'll just pray, pay, and obey? I wonder what act or actions would best raise this issue with calm clarity.

A recent Vatican statement including women's ordination on a list of grave offenses like pedophilia is sick and absurd. The "He-Man Women Haters Club" really continues to astound. I worry about acting in a way that immediately makes one irrelevant. Some of our actions in the peace movement speak only to others in the peace movement. I'm not saying the

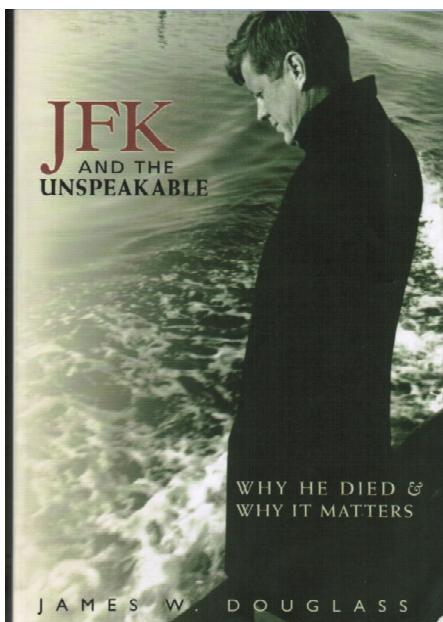
issue is effectiveness—we have control over the effort, not the outcome. It's just a desire to keep one's foot meaningfully in the door the Vatican desperately wants to shut. If our internal Church structures should reflect our hopes and aspirations for the larger society, then our misogynous Church does a very poor job. It aligns itself with those who oppress, abuse, and exploit women. Yeah, women are great, but they can't lead worship or hold meaningful power. Do we resist when other authorities speak wrongly on an issue (e.g. Gitmo), but must stand in line quietly when the Church does the same? I know Dorothy Day was quite conservative on Church matters (even as she was withering in her criticism of scandalous Mother Church). I don't think she'd be in the forefront on this issue, if she even agreed with it at all. I think it would be powerful, for example, if priests came out publicly in favor of it, or something of the sort. Silence gives consent. I have no grand ideas, but it is interesting how we handle this.

Joe McKenzie-Hamilton
New York, New York



Catholic Worker Calendar

October 2— "One Nation Working Together" demonstration: Please join peace and labor activists in Washington, DC to speak out for an peaceful and just economy. Coordinated by **United For Peace and Justice**, www.unitedforpeace.org. Those unable to go to DC can gather at Lincoln Square in Worcester from noon to 2 P.M.



October 5—JFK, Obama, and the Unspeakable: Please come hear James Douglass, the renowned author of the most authoritative investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, talk on its relevance today. 7 P.M., Saxe Room, Worcester Public Library, Salem Square.

October 4, 25 & November 8—Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7:30 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

October 21 & November 18—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street in Worcester.

October 1 & November 5—Vigil Against War & Abortion: Join us for a vigil starting at the military recruiting station on Park Avenue and ending across from Planned Parenthood on Pleasant Street in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

November 5-7—New England War Tax Resisters Annual Gathering: All are welcome at the Cambridge Friends Meeting Center, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge, MA. Contact Larry Dansiger: rosc@psouth.net.

Mason Street Musings

World War III against our bed bug foes may be nearing its climax. New exterminators are coming tomorrow for their third, and God willing, final visit. Every stitch of clothing and bedding has been washed, dried, and stored in air-tight plastic containers, many of them stacked for the past month on our porches. Everything we own had to be moved or packed for each treatment. We would have lost our minds with the turmoil and cost of the battle were it not for many of you who came to our rescue and helped us out. People even helped replace our ancient computer and even more ancient rug in the basement office.

Although we've had to live like refugees since late July, nevertheless, we've been blessed to discover many an heirloom which we presumed were long lost. One of those items is the following poem by our daughter Grace when she was about 5 years old.

MUD

Mud mud I can't resist it,
Mommy said, "NO!"
but I said "YES!"
Mud mud you're the best.

As well as finding things, we've also lost track of items which are now packed incomprehensibly under titles like "useful junk." For weeks, I couldn't find the house banner or two other banners we use at a monthly vigils. I opened many bags and boxes without success until I found a

note posted in our hall from a former guest apologizing for "borrowing" sheets without our permission. They kept him warm during a cold spell in mid-August and are now lost to the ages. Maybe they served the Gospel better as bedding.

And then, in the midst of our disjointed summer, we received numerous calls from various agencies pleading with us to shel-



S. Jude

ter a very pregnant Haitian woman named Emmanuella, whose home was destroyed in the earthquake. Her visa expired just prior to her due date. She couldn't very well go then to the immigration office in Boston to plead for an extension. Nonetheless, various shelters would not accept her. We did, and, for the second time in recent memory, Claire was able to attend a birth. The curly-haired baby is named Christy,

after Jesus Christ. None of us, not Claire, not Rao, not Dave, nor I, can resist holding the little cherub. She opens one eye wide and scrunches the other closed like a pirate without a patch.

We took them today to the Department of Transitional Assistance which might help them only because Christy is a US citizen. We are waiting to hear if they will place them in a family shelter. With the impersonal style of all bureaucracies, they warned Emmanuella that if she refuses to go to or leaves from whatever shelter they send her to, anywhere in the state, she will be banned for a year from services. Our van is packed with baby clothes, a bassinets, bouncy seat, and other useful items given to her since her arrival with us. We'll probably have to add them to our porch-side warehouse until she is situated.

When dealing with bureaucracies, I wonder, "Where is the compassion in this country?" And then, I see it in the overwhelmingly generous people who read our paper, who send donations, who come by to volunteer, and who speak out for the poor, the immigrant, the stranger, and all those the mob tells us to fear and hate. You don't get a tax deduction or an article in the daily paper about your kindness, but you are the reason we could host Emmanuella and Christy. On behalf of future guests, I thank you all! Ω

Scott

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

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